



The Jesse Klump Memorial Fund, Inc.
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January 31, 2022

HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
Testimony in Support
HB293- Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services, 9-8-8 Trust Fund

The Jesse Klump Memorial Fund (JKMF) is the primary nonprofit organization devoted to suicide prevention outreach and education on the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland. Since the Jesse Klump Suicide Awareness & Prevention Program was created in 2011 with many partners including health departments and schools, the JKMF has taught “suicide prevention first aid” to over a thousand local citizens. The JKMF has also created and sustained statewide programs to address suicide risk in farming communities, and has reached out to veterans to stem the rising tide of suicide in that group. The JKMF has appeared at hundreds of community events, and hosts monthly support groups for those who lost loved ones to suicide.

The JKMF urges you to support HB293, which will establish a sustainable source of funding for the new 988 suicide prevention crisis line which will launch in July 2022.

There are currently eight active all-purpose crisis hotlines operative in Maryland. Recent data reveals that the rates of suicidal ideation, already rising before the COVID-19 pandemic, have spiked nationwide, especially among young people. It is anticipated that when 988 replaces the cumbersome 800-273-8255 crisis centers will experience a deluge of calls. HB293 will assure those who manage crisis phone services, as well as those actually manning the phones, have adequate resources to respond quickly and effectively. Saving lives from suicide isn't just a matter of compassion; there are economic impacts as well. The CDC estimates that every suicide in the nation bears a cost of over \$1 million.

Among the challenges we face as educators is difficulty of access to help, and stigma against asking for help. Changing the current hotline will alleviate these barriers to saving lives, from not only suicide but from addictive disorders and other behavioral health challenges. *The launch of 988 is the single most important step to address these issues in decades.* We urge you to advance this important bill.

Kim A. Klump, President

Financial Support
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Ocean City MD



The *Jesse Klump Memorial Fund*, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation, exists to end the tragedy of suicide, to provide a place of healing for those who have lost loved ones to suicide, to financially support scholars of any age who have demonstrated a desire to make the world a better place through original, entrepreneurial community action, and to provide grants for training for healthcare and education professionals dedicated to suicide prevention and mental health.

ARE YOU CONSIDERING SUICIDE? WORRIED ABOUT SOMEONE? CALL 1-800-273-TALK

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